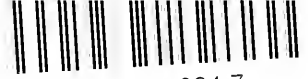


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GRANT MEMORIAL ADDRESS.

DELIVERED AT LANCASTER, O., AUGUST 8th, 1885.

BY JUDGE SILAS H. WRIGHT.

When a great man dies the whole world suffers loss. Our country, territorially embracing all climates and extending from sea to sea, is to day as a single state, as a county, a township, a precinct. The distinction of lines is lost. The eminence of capitals is leveled. The poor and the rich this day stand upon common ground. The distinguished and the unknown strike hands, and festoon the porticos of palaces and the porches of cottages with badges of mourning. All the black stuffs of commerce are in requisition. There are more darkened doors to-day than ever before opened in the land. A late President of the United States no longer lives. To have been President of our States is glory enough for all time. A crown in England or France or Russia or Austria is as pewter to silver, as asbestos to clear gold. These great States, every one of them fit for Empires for the highest sovereignty. To be Governor of a State, what imperial power, what delegation of authority,

what surrender of strength and voice on the part of the people. And to be President of all the States, so increasing in number, as that one can hardly keep count; States so rich, so wide-spread, so free, so unconquerable, so loyal, so of one mind, such a unit as to principles and purposes, is a sort of gerency that makes us wonder that one man can so get the start of this great globe as to be so honored and so trusted. It is comparatively easy to be a King. That relation is usually ignoble and hereditary. Small heads and infirm hands may wear the crown and wield the sceptre. Some fine horseman, some adept robber, some skillful cut throat is father and godfather of most that wear the purple. The hour is coming, it even now strikes, when the world's multitude will tramp out all the traditions of royalty and tear up all the parchments that give license to the great to lord it over his weaker but better brother. The science of majorities is only of mod-



ern growth. It works in state and nation. It is the ruling spirit of township and ward. Its sacred seat is the ballot box. The strip of white paper is an arrow that strikes the center. It is an army with banners. It is the flower and spirit of some old Eden that came near being forgotten. Let the countries and communities of the world print their opinions, let them be counted, and sweet peace and security will have universal empire. Men will fight and ought to fight without cessation for rights that are natural and inalienable. We may well congratulate ourselves that we have so wide and rich a garden in which to plant and perpetuate the seeds of liberty and free government. It is all ours between the two oceans. The far East is rushing to us as to a vacuum.—The worn out and effete come here for recuperation; the young and manly and unsubjugated come here to work out fortunes and register an eternal protest against stolen property and power usurped. From many, one—this is our strength, our safety, the promise and pledge of unlimited expansion. Let the townships behave well and conserve their autonomy; let the counties do the like and the States also; then the continent, and the whole world indeed, may come into our compact and be made homogenous and fraternal.

So close are the nations now that the American from some ridge of the Rockies or the Alleghenies can almost throw a stone into the Mediterranean or ruffle the waters of the Black Sea or the Caspian. There is about to be recognized a brotherhood among the sons of men. Size and color, and strength and parentage mark no distinctions as in old days. They are obsolete. These conditions and proclivities work wonders among men. A new race in fact seems to spring from new gardens. Is there anywhere in the world such an anthology as Washington, Jefferson, Calhoun, Webster, Jackson, Lincoln, and Grant, Sherman, Lee and the "Stonewall"—that other Jackson. The world's limits, since history commenced its account of things has no such array of names as these. It were honor enough for this age if men were henceforth to fail, and only pigmies were to be the product of the years. What similitudes and differences ran through the warp and woof of these men.—And they are all dead but one. Grant to-day will be placed out of the sight of men. A funeral procession stretches across the continent. Pall bearers come from the Confederacy. Joe Johnston comes craped from distant Oregon, and Buckner from the blue grass. Cannons began

THE
NATION
PUBLISHED WEEKLY
NEW YORK
1864

to boom this morning early, they will disturb the air all day.— Carriages and horses and flags and gathered multitudes of people will this day declare and testify a mighty woe.

Tears may be the solace of private and intimate life, of kinship and relation; but there is a grief above and beyond tears.— When the Republic wails, there is a sorrow that settles over us like an atmosphere. It pervades great cities, it comes to waste places, it creeps into cabins, it sweeps the savannas, it envelops mountains, it gets into cars and is carried in carts. Grant living, would be distressed with all this. He was made of metal little fit for tintinabulation. He once came to our western shores from afar. A proud rich city did him reverence. It arrayed itself in purple. It flooded its streets with gold. Hurrahs and hosannas assaulted the blue. Enough canvas floated in the air to cover the equator in all of its vast circumference. It pleased him not, but he submitted. The smoke of his cigar was of greater consequence, of higher felicitation. I am not far enough removed from Grant to understand him. He never well understood himself.— He was unique without knowing it. There was something like gravitation about him that does its voiceless but inevitable work.

The great man is a still man. He mouths it not. The conqueror of the turf comes to the scratch temperate and composed. It is he who surprises the second hand of chronometers or makes it stand still for the accomplishment of exploits fit for history. "I will fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." This sounds like a repeater, a four miler, a race horse of battles. There is no sounding brass in this, no tinkling cymbals. It looks like a theorem nearly demonstrated in advance. It smacks of West Point and Scotland. It is western and moves like the Mississippi. The mighty line passed from lip to lip all over the land. The Rebels, if I may call them such, at least our much erring and mistaken brethren across the river, felt cold steel enter their bosoms at the point of these words. They have gone into a proverb and sound to the ear as fathered by old centuries. Our language would have been ineffectual without them. They are a resource and support when all other phrases fail. They are counseling and consolatory in stringent times. They come to us in dreams. They animate us in despair. They capitalize our energies and lift us above ourselves. We can bank our weakness on these words. Time has taken hold of them and willed

them as substantial property to eternity. The farmer quotes them in reference to weeds and crops. The cow-boy calls them to his cattle. They shorten the way of the wanderer. They prop the pioneer. They swim with ships the wide ocean. They come to the keels of canal boats to encourage their captains.-- They go afoot, on horseback, every way and every where.-- These words are incapable of death. They stand together in beautiful brotherhood. They illustrate a great idea. They voice the will of a great nation. Cannon boom in them, swords gleam in them, elections approve them, Presidents sprout from them.

Grant has been called the sphynx, so voiceless was he. He might, but for a few phrases, have been born speechless. He could have done his appointed tasks by a motion of his hand. His fingers could have declared the line of march for armies and the awful moment of onset. A few pages will embrace his dispatches. A few columns of a small book will record his addresses. Volumes will be given to his acts. He was, I think, the most impassable, impervious and impenetrable man that ever lived. He was insensible to danger. If ever the earth had opened at his feet, and yawned to its red and fiery center, he would have stood composed and complacent and tipped

his cap to destruction. He may not have been a very tender man—he was too mathematical for that. The science of comparative columns he understood to perfection. Numbers were his weapons. He put men into the breech as if they were marbles or billiard balls. He knew that the true soldier enlisted to die, not to live; and he put him accordingly. A mown swath of men touched him only remotely; his mind was made up for that; but a blistered shoulder, a fractured limb encountered unexpectedly, moved him as deeply as the tenderest and most sympathetic. His profession made him a soldier; but for that and the times that called for him, he would have gravitated to the tillage of the fields. How a herd of grazing cattle or colts, with subdued heads would have captured his fancy. The strong, fleet, but not over fast horse had the benediction of his eyes. He would have fed his Berkshire pigs with as much composure and pride as to approve some parchment of Congress. His big oxen laboring with a load of wood would have brought inexpressible satisfaction. I know not whether it is so, but I guess, that complicated machinery and great engines must have been the General's delight. I suspect that he was an inventor, though the Patent rolls may not be graced with

his name. His keen sense of favors bestowed, disarmed him of suspicion and sometimes finetuned or twisted his judgment. He stopped not much to enquire of motive. The act, if on its face and forehead, was generous, there was no underpeeping to find fraud. I think the General might easily have been cheated in a horse trade, especially "sight unseen." He never cared to be our President. He had not considered or respected politics or politicians. Some small office would have pleased him as much as the Presidency. He would have served a writ of restitution to a small property with the like feeling as setting his name to a veto. It alarmed him when called to a second term. He despised the conspiracy that attempted to lug him into the third.

Grant esteemed it a kindness to be defeated. He thought well of the American people on that account. The American people thought well of themselves on that account. There was unanimity and concordance in that behalf. If any man since Washington deserved three terms it was Grant. He would not, could not have harmed the country.—Our country has immunity from injury. No single administration, however bad, or many bad administrations cannot mar us. We have bone and sinew and recuperative energies almost in-

calculable. Let pride rear its snaky head, let faction assail us, let ambition plan in secret places, the brave men of the plains and the Hillicans, as they are called, will come to a rescue. We all stick to our parties; organization and colaboration are natural and pleasing to man. If all work for the best, the end will come in alternations and in periods. No one man is better than all other men. No one party in this part of the world has a signature for unlimited succession. There is no patent for perpetuity except honesty and decency, and they both are fond of shift and change. They like new residences. Bad odors come from long tenancy.—The ash bins must be cleaned; lime must be sprinkled; even blood must be let at times. But human blood is a precious thing. Its globules are more than golden. It is entitled to its full span. It has a right to run the rounds of the heart for three score years and ten. But in some strange way, by some mystery beyond man's ken, death seems to be the way to life. Grant's death is somewhat more pronounced and vicarious than even Lincoln's.—Lincoln had to die the death he did to make the South sorrowful, to make the North a unit. There was perhaps no need of Garfield's sacrifice; yet it went far to drape all doors with a common symbol of sadness. A crazy fool,

an irresponsible madman shot him. God may have pulled the trigger behind Gittens's back.— Old John Brown's head was shaped and furnished somewhat as his. But Brown's soul is marching on. The weak things confound the strong. Ford's theatre will be a shrine for pilgrims north and south; the bloody spot in the Baltimore depot at Washington will take the eye of the moving, traveling world, and Mt. Gregor will be resplendent with light and love as long as our flag floats or a State has a written Constitution.

I would not be hypercritical, scarcely even critical as to the spot in which our dead leader's bones are to rest. It matters little where any human dust is laid. The wild trump of the last day will collect it, however widely dispersed. The tenement that is fit for the soul must abide and last as the soul. To be buried in the sea is doubtless a sweet entombment—the clear waters scouring and whitening flesh and bones. But who can find the body? Where shall friends go to pray? To be lost in space, to be intangible, to be unapproachable, solitary, is full of discomfort.—“Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.” Graves are huddled together, not for want of space, not to save expense, but on account of a sentiment of neighborhood and society.

Single burials will never command the suffrages of the living; The dead are more urban than the living. They quarrel not; the soul is citizen and the body serene—

“And there while so quietly lying it fancies
A holier odor, about it of pansies—
A rose-mary odor commingled with pansies,
With rue and the beautiful Puritan pansies.”

I will not undertake to impress my sentiments at this late day upon the public. I never have tried too, and could not if I would. But it has come to my mind these few nights past that as Grant went to the war from Illinois, as his career commenced there, and as Lincoln, that superb humanitarian and impartial statesman rests at Springfield, that Grant ought in the eternal fitness of things, find repose close by his side. Failing in this, I protest against all Parks; Riverside or Central has no claim to such sacred dust. West Point has some right to ask for him. He was its son. Perpetuity clings to its soil and rocks. One great soldier would have dignified all tofts and crofts forever. But West Point aside and Springfield not having been selected, my hand and my heart are for the place of his birth—Point Pleasant, down in glorious old Clermont of our incomparable State of Ohio. Under the chimney of the cabin in which he was born he ought to have been buried. The Ohio can sing as good a requiem as the Hudson. A son of Ohio ought

to rest in its soil. As some one in the Brooklyn Ege says: "Mount Vernon and Washington are not different terms to the mind. The place and the man are complementary. The home and its founder reciprocally suggest one and the other. The Mount is as calm and benignant as the character of him who lived on it and whose body its bosom encloses. * * * So too where Abraham Lincoln lived is Abraham Lincoln buried. * * *

* And the other free son of the West on whom the fate of faction fell out of the blue, died on the threshold of great designs for his country, to be laid in Lake View by the waters which reflected to his young eyes and murmured to his

young mind the story of all noble doings * * In the same spirit of local selection, Quincy holds the remains of the Adamases, men as granite in their character, as the produce of her quarries. Monticello which rejoiced Jefferson in life claimed him in death." This day, this 8th of August will remain memorable forever. The bells of cities and of hamlets have been clanging since the dawn. The Great General goes to rest. He only precedes others by a short date. Rebel and loyalist will all soon settle their contentions and quarrels — There is an Appomattox above as well as here below. "LET US HAVE PEACE."

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